



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Fargo Man Sentenced on Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering Charge

FARGO - United States Attorney Drew Wrigley announces that on December 9, 2005, **Charles Roger Dewald** of Fargo, North Dakota, was sentenced before United States District Court Judge Ralph R. Erickson on a charge of violent crime in the aid of racketeering. This is the first time the United States Attorney's Office for the District of North Dakota has used the violent crime in aid of racketeering statute contained in 18 U.S.C. § 1959.

On September 17, 2002, an unknown assailant cut the throat of Tom Desotel in downtown Fargo. After a two-year investigation into a significant drug trafficking organization, law enforcement determined that **Dewald** was Desotel's assailant. **Dewald** was an enforcer for the drug trafficking/racketeering enterprise of Bruce Tollefson and other co-conspirators. Tollefson and his cohorts were concerned that Desotel, also co-conspirator in the organization, was going to inform law enforcement about the organization's activities.

Dewald, 48, pleaded guilty on September 14, 2005, to cutting the throat of Tom Desotel with a knife, causing a 12-centimeter laceration which required 20 sutures.

Judge Erickson sentenced **Dewald** to 20 years' imprisonment to be followed by five years of supervised release. **Dewald** was ordered to pay a \$100 special assessment to the Crime Victim's Fund.

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As of today, 14 defendants have been indicted in the conspiracy. Desotel, who was also indicted in the conspiracy, will be sentenced on December 15, 2005. Tollefson and Wade Horn will be sentenced on the same day for their roles in the throat cutting and conspiracy.

Jose Ledesma of Pasco, Washington, pleaded guilty to continuing criminal enterprise and will be sentenced on December 16, 2005. Ledesma was the source of supply for Tollefson and his organization.

“This case illustrates the power of cooperation by federal, state, and local authorities in dismantling drug trafficking organizations and solving the associated violent crime,” stated Assistant United States Attorney Chris Myers, “With such cooperation, it is virtually impossible to escape the net of a federal historical drug investigation. Without the hard work, cooperation, and commitment of these agencies to making our community safe, this violent incident would still be unsolved.”

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration in North Dakota and Washington; North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation; and the Fargo, West Fargo, and Moorhead Police Departments.

U. S. Attorney Wrigley remarked of **Dewald’s** sentence, “Does anyone seriously still believe that the illegal drug trade represents a victimless crime? Every significant drug-trafficking conspiracy has enforcers like **Charles Dewald**. Make no mistake, he is a violent street thug who helped make it possible for this conspiracy to move an enormous amount of methamphetamine into and through North Dakota. The other shoe is starting to drop and **Charles Dewald** has 20 years in Federal prison to come to terms with the seriousness of his crimes.”

Assistant United States Attorneys Chris Myers and Brett Shasky prosecuted the case.